

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6: 9-14

Summer Sermon Series 2020

Living Word Lutheran Church

Week One: You've Got a Father – a *Dear* Father!

There are two foci of the intro to The Lord's Prayer: Who God is and where God is. *Really good news*: Jesus could have referred to God His Father in any number of lofty titles that the Bible uses (Almighty God, Creator, Ruler of the Universe, etc.). But instead, we are introduced to a God who loves us as a perfect Father who wants to be close to us – *very close to us*. As a matter of fact, the form of the word "Father" Jesus uses is almost like "Daddy" or "Papa" in the language of the day. He is our DEAR Father. More importantly, He is the waiting Father of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and He simply wants all "His kids" home, safe and forgiven.

So where can we find this Father? In some far away Heaven? NO, St Augustine and many other Biblical scholars suggest a better translation to be Kingdom. In other words, God is our Dear Father who lives in His Kingdom –IN US! The scriptures teach us this is where God wants to make His home and reign – in our hearts!

Your assignment this first week was to daily pray only one of the petitions of The Lord's Prayer daily so you can meditate on it. Do it several times a day.

Week Two: His Name, His Kingdom, His Will, His Provision

Intro: 1) Why do we pray? Why did disciples ask to learn to pray instead of power to resurrect/feed, etc.? We pray because we are weak. We think we're strong so we only turn to God in prayer occasionally. No, GOD is strong! **2)** NOT a last resort "Well, I called all my contacts, got good doctors, medicine, etc. guess now "all I can do is JUST pray"....?! Prayer should be a FIRST, not last resort.

His Name ("Holy be Your Name"):

DON'T MESS WITH GOD'S NAME, OR ABUSE IT – note the Second Commandment--this includes spiritual things and terminology that belong in God's realm. GOD decides who is damned and isn't. GOD conquered Hell for you, DON'T USE PROFANITY. PERIOD.

Instead, understand the POWER of learning to use God's name. Specifically, the power of PRAISE – that key that “opens doors” in our lives!

His name says it all, We dare not abuse the name of the Almighty -- “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain”!! It's really important to use His name in love/respect because THAT'S what WE need –His name unlocks His power/help.

His Kingdom (“Thy Kingdom Come”)

Bring His holiness into your heart. The holiness of His name, creates His Kingdom in us –remember St. Augustine's concept of where God's Kingdom is?

Just think of cool it is to live in God's Kingdom, in and around you daily – protection, security, peace. Give God free reign, HIS reign, in every corner of your life.

Jesus never told anybody—neither His disciples nor us—to pray, “Hey God --get me out of here so I can go up there!” His prayer was, make “up there”, His Kingdom, come “down here” -- it's also God's invitation to join Him in making things “down here the way they are up there”. Get busy!

We're here for a divine purpose. Ask God to show you how you can be part of His “program”.

What about “The End Times”? Let God worry about that. Live your daily life in God's Kingdom IN YOU!

His Will (“May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”)

Learning to live in God's kingdom means learning to submit to His will. Let Him train you to His way of thinking, His priorities, so when we pray ASKING, we are praying for what He wants! It's not about asking; it's about letting Him teach us His will for our lives.

Be careful what you ask for!! Remember the joke about the 60-year-old guy who instantly became 90 years old? :)

His Provision (Give us this day our daily bread”)

This is why these petitions hang together – Asking Him for daily bread is an extension of learning to simply accept what He gives NOT what WE want

Luther would say: Learn to GIVE THANKS! God sees to our daily needs anyway; we need to learn to live in His provision.

Your assignment for this week, pray/think/meditate on ONE of the above concepts every day.

Week Three:

Forgiven People Are Forgiving People and Forgiving People Are Forgiven People

We started with a word study:

Trespasses? Debts? Sins? Go with Sins" (Aramaic), gets to the heart of "hurting"

First challenge this week: Father forgive me for the times, the many times, I have not only disobeyed you or "strayed", but that I have hurt YOU. **Let's get honest here and use the word "hurt".** Yes, we can "hurt " God: check out Father in Prodigal Son. Gen 6:6 Noah story, Hosea 11:1-4, Jeremiah, etc.. Tell God this week you are sorry that as His child **you have hurt Him –From the heart.....find that place in your heart....Its all about motivation to NOT sin/hurt your heavenly Father, again.**

YOUR ASSURANCE, PEACE: HE always forgives His truly repentant children. **Our sin is removed as far as the east is from the west...!**

Second challenge this week: Dare to forgive those who have hurt us. Does it even make sense that we would withhold forgiveness then expect God to forgive us?? I can guarantee it doesn't make sense to God – reread the parable of the unforgiving servant Matt. 18: 21-35.

BUT What if...they haven't asked? Remember: You and I LIVE in God's GRACE – let others live in YOUR grace.

BUT What if they are dead? Remember: you're not just forgiving those who hurt you for their sake, more importantly, we forgive others so THAT DESTRUCTIVE BURDEN of carrying unforgiveness around all our lives can be LIFTED -- REMOVED!!

BUT What if they keep doing it! Reread Matt 18 – how many times do we forgive?? Seventy times seven. Remember: We also will sin again,{

So forget the "BUT WHAT IF....")!!

So, dear brothers and sisters, begin your week of forgiveness remove ALL SINS/HURTS -- yours and others as far as the east is from the west!!

Pray for those who have hurt us. I KNOW this a big one for many of us. Maybe start small, "babysteps"

Bless those who have hurt us, yes, I know this is a tough one, but it will mean that you **really mean** you want them and you to live in forgiveness, healing, and grace.

This week:

1. Practice forgiving this week. We seem to be having time to get caught upon everything else in our lives, why not this?
2. Pray **"and forgive me Dear Father for hurting you with my sin, I promise to forgive those who have hurt me..."** Try it!

Remember: Forgiven People Are Forgiving People and Forgiving People Are Forgiven People

Put a crinkle in your eyes!

Week Four:

Biblical Solutions to Temptation and “The Problem of Evil”

Sin City!! Aren't you glad we are 90 miles from Las Vegas and “temptations”?! Ooops, not so fast! First of all, Las Vegas is actually a pretty nice small city and place to live AND we all know that temptation is a matter of the heart and our will, not geography....

Let's start with a couple of clarifying word studies and then some insight into “temptation” and “evil”.

The Greek word for temptation has multiple meanings depending on context. The same word can be accurately translated as “trials, temptation, testing, and, most interestingly, even “to experiment”. All too often isn't that the form temptation takes in our lives? “I think I'll just TRY this – I'm sure I can control the outcome”. *Wrong!* That's the slippery slope that leads to sin and lots of hurt. **If something looks like it could be trouble –back away. No experimenting!**

The second lesson for us today is to resist the temptation **to blame God for our temptations!** Read and read the words from James 1: 13-14 *“Let no one say “I am being tempted by God. God tempts no one. But each of us is tempted when we are lured and enticed by our own desires.” Got it??*

Now about this “Problem of Evil”.....

Quick word study: the same Greek word for “evil” can be translated, legitimately, as a concept (evil in general) or if the context assigns a gender to the noun (in this case masculine) it becomes an individual i.e. the “Evil One”. *No ladies you can't use this to blame every thing bad on your husbands.....*). This explains legitimate differences in translations of this petition of the Lord's Prayer.

Why, we ask, would a good God let bad things happen? Why can't He just make everything good and perfect? *He did. It was called the Garden of Eden. WHO messed that up? God? No. Adam and Eve and US. Why US? Because, like Adam and Eve, every time choose ourselves and our desires over God's rule, we invite evil into our lives and His originally perfect world. The result is a world now “fallen”, as the Bible says, or corrupted by the constant presence and troubles caused by evil.*

Evil doesn't play by the rules. It is horribly indiscriminate. Children get cancer, Floods kill people (St. Paul reminds us that "all of creation groans under the burden of sin..."). We live in a broken world, thanks to our invitations for evil to come in as we choose evil over God.

There are also some obvious "cause and effects" in operation here: if someone drinks too much and drives and kills innocent people in an accident, that drunk's very bad and destructive choices caused the suffering. On a larger scale, the insanity and evil choices of Adolf Hitler caused the loss of millions of innocent lives.

So, what's the solution to "The Problem of Evil"? **YOU. Your choices NOW.** Its sort of a reverse process: instead of **choosing** to sin, **choose** to obey God's rule. *The Ten Commandments are not rocket science – they are very simple and straight forward.* Far more importantly, **CHOOSE TO LOVE as God has loved YOU!** Defy your desires to please yourself (see James text above) and beg God for His grace and strength to CHOOSE TO LOVE when that's the last thing you want to do!

Ultimately, the solution to the "Problem of Evil" is that God so loved His world and His children that He sent His amazing Son, Jesus, to take to the cross all our "bad choices" (sin) and hurts we have caused and PAID for it all. You are now FREE TO SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE BEING PART OF THE SOLUTION TO "THE PROBLEM OF EVIL – CHOOSE TO LOVE!

As this sermon series progresses, we will be seeing that this is not only Jesus teaching us *how to pray*, but just as importantly its learning *how to LIVE!!*

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